

Research Articles

Lithuanian Gymnasium Students' Career and Professional Self-Determination

Vincentas Lamanauskas*^a, Dalia Augienė^a^[a] Department of Education, Šiauliai University, Šiauliai, Lithuania.

Abstract

Career education is a very important part of general/comprehensive education. One of the main components of this process is proper students' preparation for professional choice (professional self-determination). Thus, it is important to know objective and subjective factors determining young persons' professional self-determination. Such awareness is important and necessary for the school, which accepts responsibility for the formation of students' professional purposefulness and professional self-determination maturity. Lithuanian gymnasium students have to make an early decision concerning future professional activity. At the beginning of 2018, a complex research was carried out, comprising qualitative and quantitative approaches. Formulating research aim is to analyse Lithuanian gymnasium students' professional self-determination context. A total of 643 Lithuanian gymnasium 11-12 grade students took part in the research. Apart from the main research instrument (questionnaire) in the research, the researchers presented four open-ended questions. Qualitative data were processed using a quantitative content analysis. Research results revealed that the majority of female and male students thought that to properly choose a career was important, because this was a self-realisation warranty. Regardless of this, choosing a future career, both male and female students most frequently experience personal difficulties. Choosing a future career, one needs information support, different person support and self-awareness help. It has been stated that choosing a career external factors have a greater influence on both female and male students than internal ones. Choosing a career, personality character features have a bigger influence on female students, and a desire to improve, to realise oneself has a greater impact on male students.

Keywords: career education, career choice, gymnasium students, qualitative analysis, professional self-determination

Psychological Thought, 2018, Vol. 11(2), 148–173, doi:10.5964/psyct.v11i2.308

Received: 2018-08-11. Accepted: 2018-09-03. Published (VoR): 2018-10-31.

Handling Editors: Marius Drugas, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania; Stanislava Stoyanova, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

*Corresponding author at: 29 K. Donelaicio Street, LT-78115 Šiauliai, Lithuania. E-mail: vincentaslamauskas@yahoo.com



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Professional young persons' self-determination is an indispensable life sphere of a current society. It is inseparable from general all-round personality development. One of the main career education objectives in general education schools is purposeful professional self-determination assurance. In career education programme (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014) it is indicated that it is important to create appropriate conditions for students to develop career competencies themselves, to support students in their self-awareness, creating and realising themselves, getting awareness of career possibilities, career planning and career implementation strategies (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014). Career education process aim is to help a young person to choose a career corresponding to his/her calling.

Professional self-determination problematics in Lithuania has certain traditions. These questions are examined constantly, in fact. Research shows that a number of factors influence professional self-determination. [Vabalas-Gudaitis \(1983\)](#) and [Laužikas \(1993\)](#) distinguished some external and internal factors making a career choice. After 1990, various studies in this sphere have been carried out in Lithuania. Research shows that not enough attention is paid to individual work with students, to ascertaining their professional purposefulness, to projecting their future career ([Antanaitienė & Sajienė, 2012](#)). A research carried out by [Railienė \(2007\)](#) shows that both students and teachers lack information about choosing a career path and further activity (learning or study) possibilities. On the other hand, looking into the questions of professional self-determination, it would be good to evaluate final class student participants' family, economic, social and demographic data ([Pečiulytė, Ustinavičiūtė, & Norvilė, 2014](#)). It is known that young people, having more doubt about their career choice, pay more attention to the external factors, related to the financial expenses of studying or to the financial perspectives of a dominating speciality representative. Young people, having less doubt about their career choice, pay more attention to the internal factor – their hobbies ([Pociūtė & Isiūnaitė, 2011](#)). The gender aspect is very significant. Society ascribes different social roles, social attitudes, social norms and stereotypes to one gender or another. Research shows that gender can influence the choices you make regarding your career ([Domeikytė, 2010](#)). In education system, gender differences exist both in choosing a further learning institution and a career. Gender stereotypes, which are followed by teachers and by students, have an effect on career selection ([Domeikytė, 2010](#)). The job of career specialists is of great importance. Opinion research carried out by career specialists about a career education demand in a general education school shows that professional self-determination demand is the most important: helps students to prepare for life, students need various consultations, helps to become aware of the work world, satisfies the demand of meetings with career representatives/employers, the demand of career events and the demand of information ([Lamanauskas & Augienė, 2017](#)). Career actualisation demand is also important, because it helps students understand career importance, encourages low motivation students to be interested in their career ([Lamanauskas & Augienė, 2017](#)).

In an international context, not a few scientific studies do research in the process of a career choice. At the same time the researchers state that there is a lack of empirical research in this sphere ([Hirschi, 2010](#)). In the career decision making process, not only school, but also family have a great influence ([Ferry, 2006](#); [Marshall, Young, Domene, & Zaidman-Zait, 2008](#)), accumulated and current experience ([Larsen, McGill, & Palmer, 2003](#)). It has been stated that the process by which families influence career development/decision choice is complex and is influenced by many different contextual factors (race, gender, and age) ([Whiston & Keller, 2004](#)). The other factors are of no less importance. [Griffin, Hutchins, and Meece \(2011\)](#) found that there were some differences between students depending on their family status. Students from economically weak families have much more trusted teachers and expect their help in the career issues. Research carried out in Kenia also shows that gender, self-concept and vocational stereotyping were among the factors that influenced career choices of high school learners ([Osoro, Amundson, & Borgen, 2000](#)). This confirms that career choice/self-determination questions remain urgent.

It is obvious that lately significantly bigger opportunities exist to freely choose a career, on the other hand, the significance of youth individual competence and personal responsibility increases. As research shows, a person's career choice and work determine the quality of his/her life, well-being, self-evaluation and social status ([Petkevičiūtė, 2006](#)).

In Lithuanian gymnasiums, it is sought to form proper conditions for career education. Support is provided for students to evaluate the main factors of purposeful career choice and to make a decision in choosing the most appropriate future profession or in other ways to join the labour market. Professional self-determination is a complex and relatively long process already due to an intensively growing number of careers, on the other hand, because of such a technoeconomic dynamics, it is difficult to foresee future careers. Besides, professional self-determination is not a single act, because not only human personality changes, but career content as well (Pukelis & Navickienė, 2006). Thus, there is a lack of deeper understanding about the importance of a career choice, emerging difficulties, need of support and the main factors having influence on the young persons' professional self-determination. The aim of the research is to analyse professional self-determination context of Lithuanian gymnasium students. Such research questions are formulated:

- What is gymnasium students' opinion about the importance of an appropriate career choice?
- What difficulties arise in professional self-determination process?
- What support is necessary in professional self-determination process?
- What factors possibly determine professional self-determination?

Method

General Characteristics

The research is combined (quantitative and qualitative). Qualitative part of the research is examined separately, because such research generates “words, rather than numbers, as data analysis” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 2). The research was carried out in the months January to February 2018. The research is based on the attitude that gymnasium students' position and evaluated research have an important role due to the fact that they allow indicating and defining urgent problems and interpreting the already known issues, foreseeing career education provided in gymnasiums' enhancement possibilities. Referring to the respondents' suggestion and insight analysis, reasonable adjustments can be made in career education process. The research provides an opportunity to see the reality that the respondents can see themselves (Kardelis, 2007).

Research Sample and Ethics

Conducting combined /mixed methods research, a wide contact person circle was used, in this case, career coordinators working in gymnasiums. They participated in the research as the main research data collection participants. They were asked to make necessary agreements both with the gymnasium administration and with the respondents themselves. In total 643 students participated in the research (Table 1).

Generally, 64.2% of them female and 35.8% male took part in the research. The students from 14 Lithuanian gymnasiums, functioning in various Lithuanian regions, participated in the research. Referring to Lithuanian education management information system (ŠVIS/LEMIS, 2018) in the academic year 2017-2018, in Lithuanian general education schools (gymnasiums) have been learning 49481 11-12 grade students. Taking into consideration the recommendations of Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), for the population of 50,000, the sample of 381 respondents is possible (with the sampling bias 5% and reliability level 95%). Of course, it is possible

Table 1

Research Sample (Sample Composition)

Grade	Gender					
	Female		Male		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
11th	224	54.2	106	46.1	330	51.3
12th	189	45.8	124	53.9	313	48.7
Total	413	100.0	230	100.0	643	100.0

when full probability sample was used. In this case non-probabilistic, purposive sampling was used in the research. Two major sample forming criteria were used: a) only gymnasium second stage grades (11 and 12) were included in the research, b) gymnasiums of various size and of various geographical location were included in the research (e.g., South Lithuanian, West Lithuanian, North and Middle Lithuanian regions). So, the position is hold that such sample (643 respondents) is correct and representative enough in this research and permits drawing suitable conclusions/implications.

It is accentuated that realising such a socio-educational research, there are settled strict implementation ethic norms of such research, which define respondents' participation in the research. So, participation in this research was anonymous and at the same time voluntary.

Research Instrument

The researchers prepared the instrument that was used in the research, in which 4 major open-ended questions were formulated.

Why is it important to choose an appropriate future career? Please, express your opinion.

What difficulties arise making a career decision? Please, express your opinion.

What support is needed, to make the right career decision? Please, express your opinion.

What are the factors that influence your career choice /professional self-determination? Please comment.

The questions comprise an overall students' position about a career choice / professional self-determination.

Data Analysis

The research data were received in written form giving responses to the presented questions. Afterward the responses received by the respondents were coded. The most commonly recurring semantic units were grouped until the initial groups became clear. These groups were named as subcategories. In the second phase, the subcategories were merged into semantic categories. In the next step, the qualitative research data were processed using a quantitative content analysis (QCA), when the essential characteristics were distinguished in the information array. The inductive path was selected, i.e. from a separate, special to a more general perspective (Luobikienė, 2000). The received verbal data array was analysed in three steps, based on conventional content analysis methods:

- reading and analysis of answers in multiple stages;
- search for semantically close answers and "keywords";
- interpretation and harmonization of semantic units.

The separation of semantic units and subsequent clustering to ensure the reliability of the data analysis was performed independently by two researchers. Later, the researchers sought consensus on categorizing subcategories. The adjustment and co-ordination took place in two stages. There was a one-week interval between the first and the second co-ordination stages. The co-ordination degree was higher than 90%. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), it is enough to have correspondence percentage higher than .70 for the reliability of data. Statistical generalisation is not applied in the research, on the contrary, it is being oriented into an inductive generalisation (Smaling, 2003).

Results

Having analysed female students' answers about the importance of making the right career choice, three categories were distinguished: *Self-realisation warranty*, *Life base warranty*, *Safety warranty* (Table 2).

The first category (Table 2) *Self-realisation warranty* (40.0%) was of the largest importance. *Self-realisation warranty* revealed itself in *satisfaction with activity* (23.8%). Female students pointed out that it was important to do the job that you really liked, that work had to bring joy, not only bring income, that it was a great pleasure to do that job, which was your favourite, that having chosen properly, you could do your lovely, favourite job. *Self-realisation warranty* revealed itself in *hobby realisation* (13.6%). Female students noted, that career choice had to match your hobbies, career had to interest, career had to be like a hobby. Only having chosen a favourite career, there was a possibility to fully realise yourself. *Self-realisation possibility* also revealed itself in *improvement possibility* (2.6%). Female students indicated that a chosen career had to encourage a desire to improve and there was a possibility to implement your ambitions.

Table 2

The Importance of the Right Career Choice (Female Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
Self-realisation warranty	147	40.0
Satisfaction with activity	86	23.8
To do the job that you really like, you have to like your job	42	12.0
Work has to bring joy, not only bring income	14	3.8
You have to go to work like to a feast	12	3.2
It is a great pleasure to do the job that is your favourite	8	2.2
Determines satisfaction	5	1.3
Having made the right choice, you would do your lovely, favourite job	5	1.3
Hobby realisation	51	13.6
It has to match your hobbies, to choose according to hobbies	18	4.8
Possibility to fully realise yourself	19	5.1
Career has to interest you	6	1.6
To choose a career you like	6	1.6
Career has to be like a hobby	2	0.5

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
Improvement possibility	10	2.6
Chosen career has to encourage a desire to improve, helps to improve	8	2.2
Possibility to implement your ambitions	1	0.2
To use free education possibility	1	0.2
Life base warranty	120	32.2
Future perspective	75	20.6
This determines future, future depends on this	30	8.0
Part of your future depends on your career	16	4.3
This has a big influence on life, human life depends on career	11	3.0
This determines stability and safety in life	8	2.2
This would assure guaranteed future	7	1.8
This would assure good, guaranteed future	5	1.3
Success ambition/happiness ambition	45	12.1
A man having made the right choice will feel happy	28	7.5
This would assure good life	8	2.2
This determines life success	6	1.6
The right choice gives sense to life	3	0.8
Safety warranty	103	27.6
Self-determination importance/stability	80	21.5
The right choice saves time, time is not wasted (e.g. choosing once again)	20	5.4
Career is usually chosen for the whole life, at least for a long time	18	4.8
Having made the right choice, you wouldn't have regret later (later not to regret because of your decision)	12	3.2
Having made the right choice, you will avoid uncertainty	10	2.7
Having made the wrong choice, you will be unhappy	10	2.7
You don't have to change career	8	2.2
Inappropriate career can ruin your life	2	0.5
Material safety	13	3.5
In order to have income and profit	8	2.2
This is a living source (especially in future)	4	1.1
A person will be satisfied with his job and salary	1	0.2
Activity safety	10	2.6
This would assure a proper job	6	1.6
This determines a future career	3	0.8
Having made the right choice, one can expect the best results	1	0.2

Note. In total, 372 semantic units were extracted.

The second, according to its importance, was the category *Life base warranty* (32.2%). It consisted of two subcategories: *Future perspective* (20.6%) and *Success ambition/happiness ambition* (12.1%). Female students pointed out that choosing an appropriate career determined future perspective (determined future, future depended on this, had a big influence on your life, human life depended on a career, determined stability and safety in life, assured good, guaranteed future). The subcategory *Success ambition/happiness ambition* revealed female students' emotional satisfaction demand related to a good career choice (a person having made the right choice, would feel happy, this determined life success, gave sense to life).

The third category *Safety warranty* (27.6%) consisted of three subcategories: *Self-determination importance/stability* (21.5%), *Material safety* (3.5%), and *Activity stability* (2.6%). The subcategory *Self-determination importance/stability* (21.5%) revealed that quite a lot of female students related the right career choice to stability.

Female students noticed that the right choice saved time, career was usually chosen for the whole life, at least for a long time, having made the right choice, you would not have to regret in future, you would avoid uncertainty, having made the wrong choice, you would be unhappy, you might have to change a career, an inappropriate career could ruin your life. Quite a low position occupied the subcategories *Material safety* (3.5%) (having made the right choice, you will have income and profit, a living source, you will be satisfied with your job and salary) and *Activity stability* (2.6%) (having made the right choice, one can expect the best results, it would assure a proper job, would determine further career). One can assume that career education taking place in schools formed a modern attitude of female students to career, because the changing processes going on today in individuals' career and social environment do not guarantee any more material and activity stability and activity steadiness and safety.

Having analysed male students' answers about the importance of making the right choice, four categories were distinguished: *Self-realisation warranty*, *Life base warranty*, *Choice consequences*, *Safety warranty* (Table 3).

Table 3

The Importance of the Right Career Choice (Male Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
Self-realisation warranty	75	37.0
Satisfaction with activity	57	28.0
To be satisfied, you must like your job	12	6.0
It is a pleasure to do a favourite job	11	5.4
Possibilities to properly, fully realise oneself	8	4.0
You must like your job, in order to do what you like	6	3.0
Work has to be your favourite	5	2.5
In order to feel well	5	2.5
Doing a favourite job, a person feels better	4	2.0
The right choice guarantees, that work will be pleasant	2	1.0
The right choice guarantees, that work will be pleasant	2	1.0
A proper career guarantees an interesting job	2	1.0
Dream realisation	8	4.0
Work has to match the desires	5	2.5
In order to achieve your dreams and desires	2	1.0
It is important to know what you want to do in life	1	0.5
Career perspectives	6	3.0
To successfully climb your career ladder	2	1.0
The right choice encourages motivation to work	2	1.0
In order you could work well	2	1.0
Hobby realisation	4	2.0
A proper career is the same as a hobby	4	2.0
Life base warranty	64	32.2
Future perspective	48	24.2
This determines future	26	13.2
Life depends on this	10	5.0
Career is a part of life	3	1.5
The right career is a future guarantor, this is person's future	3	1.5
This can determine a person's life	2	1.0
The right career - a consistent life	2	1.0
Life is short, one must save time	2	1.0

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Life stability	16	8.0
The right career- a happy life	12	6.0
The right career - an easier life, guarantees an easier life	2	1.0
The right career- orderly life	1	0.5
The right career guarantees life stability	1	0.5
Choice consequences	34	16.9
Influence on life	24	11.9
It would be good not to change it later, because it is not easy to change	14	6.9
Wrong choice is only a waste of time	6	3.0
Wrong choice will cause difficulties in life	4	2.0
Influence on personality	10	5.0
In order not to regret and /or later regret	8	4.0
Inappropriate career ruins a person	2	1.0
Safety warranty	29	14.5
Material safety	20	10.0
Payment for life, a living source	12	6.0
Career has to be profitable, useful	6	3.0
The right career has to be useful to bring profit	2	1.0
Social safety	6	3.0
To guarantee social possibilities in future	6	3.0
Life quality	3	1.5
The right choice guarantees life quality	2	1.0
The right choice less stress	1	0.5

Note. In total, 202 semantic units were extracted.

The first category (Table 3) *Self-realisation warranty* (37.0%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of four subcategories: *Satisfaction with activity* (28.0), *Dream realisation* (4.0), *Career perspectives* (3.0), and *Hobby realisation* (2.0). It is obvious, that for male students the most important was satisfaction with activity. In male students' opinion, to make a good career choice is important, in order to be satisfied with your job, that it is a great pleasure to do a favourite job, doing a favourite job the person feels better, possibilities appear to properly, fully realise oneself, a good choice guarantees that the job will be pleasant, assures an interesting job. In male students' opinion, the right career choice guaranteed dream realisation, career perspectives, hobby realisation.

The second, according to its importance, was the category *Life base warranty* (32.2%). It consisted of two subcategories: *Future perspective* (24.2%) and *Life stability* (8.0%). Male students noted the right career choice was important for future perspective (determined future, life, career was a part of life, could determine a person's life, the right career was a future guarantor and so on.) and for life stability (the right career choice guaranteed a happy, easier, orderly life, guaranteed life stability).

The third, according to its importance, was the category *Choice consequences* (16.9%). It consisted of two subcategories: *Influence on life* (11.9%) and *Influence on personality* (5.0%). This shows that making a career choice male students evaluated the negative influence of the wrong choice on life as well (later one might have to change career, it is not easy to change, the wrong choice is only a waste of time, it can cause life difficulties)

and negative influence on personality (one can get disappointed and /or later regret, inappropriate career ruins a person).

The fourth, according to its importance, was the category *Safety warranty* (14.5%). In male students' opinion, a suitably chosen career was a safety guarantor, because it guaranteed *material safety* (10.0%) (the right career has to be useful, bring profit, has to be profitable, to be a living source) and *social safety* (3.0%) (guarantees social possibilities in future) and *life quality* (1.5%) (guarantees life quality, less stress).

Having analysed female students' answers about difficulties emerging making a career choice, four categories were distinguished: *Personal difficulties*, *Lack of information*, *Environmental interference*, *No difficulties* (see Table 4).

The first category (Table 4) *Personal difficulties* (59.2%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of five sub-categories: *Indecision/self-determination fears and doubts* (31.2%), *Self-awareness difficulties* (15.5%), *Achievement results* (7.3%), *Instability* (4.7%), *Lack of trust in oneself* (0.5%). It is obvious that more than half of female students experienced various personal difficulties choosing a future career. *Indecision/self-determination fear and doubts* make professional self-determination especially difficult. Female students noted that they did not know what they wanted to do in future, lots of choices, it was difficult to evaluate and make a decision, they doubted if they would be satisfied with the chosen profession, if they would like it, there was a fear to make the wrong choice, there was a lack of motivation for a career search, there was a doubt whether to choose a popular profession, or the one you like. Making a career choice, a part of the girls experienced *self-awareness difficulties* (did not know about themselves sufficiently, did not know if they would be good for that profession, it was difficult to evaluate their abilities and capacities, they doubted about their chances, they thought, that they hadn't found themselves yet, where they would like to realise themselves and so on). The female students indicated that the difficulties emerged because of *achievement results* (a fear because of final exams, doubts about learning results, achievements, lack of abilities). Not a big part of female students pointed out that their *instability* made professional self-determination more difficult (a lot of doubts arise, hobby and opinion change) and *lack of trust in oneself*.

Table 4

Difficulties Making a Career Choice (Female Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
Personal difficulties	238	59.2
Indecision / self-determination fears and doubts	126	31.2
I don't know what I want to do in future, I'm not sure about my wishes	45	11.2
A lot of choices, variants, it is difficult to evaluate and make a decision	36	8.9
I am not sure if I will be satisfied with this profession, if I like it	14	3.4
I am not sure if I like this	10	2.5
Fear of choosing the wrong career	8	2.0
There is a lack of motivation for a career search	6	1.5
Doubts about choosing a popular profession, or the one you like	5	1.2
Lack of experience	2	0.5

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Self-awareness difficulties	62	15.5
I don't know about myself quite well (self-unawareness)	20	5.0
It is difficult to understand if I am good for my chosen career	18	4.5
It is difficult to evaluate my capacities and abilities	8	2.0
I am not certain about my chances, there are doubts	8	2.0
I haven't found myself yet, where I would like to realise myself	8	2.0
Achievement results	29	7.3
A fear because of final exams (if I pass them, if I make the right choice)	20	5.0
I doubt about my learning results, achievements	6	1.5
Lack of abilities	3	0.8
Instability	19	4.7
Lots of doubts	6	1.5
Change of hobbies	8	2.0
Change of opinions	5	1.2
Lack of trust in oneself	2	0.5
Poor trust in oneself	2	0.5
Lack of information	118	29.5
Labour market	62	15.5
It is not clear if profession will be popular in future	25	6.2
I am not sure if there will be jobs, possibility to work	16	4.0
I don't know if profession will be useful	11	2.7
Instability and uncertainty	4	1.0
Big competitiveness in the labour market	3	0.8
It is difficult to evaluate career demand	3	0.8
Knowledge about professions	48	11.9
Big variety of careers, abundance	15	3.7
Lack of information about careers	11	2.7
Fear of not earning enough	10	2.5
It is not clear if this profession will be perspective	5	1.2
It is not clear if the work will be well-paid	4	1.0
Desire to have more than one profession	3	0.8
Study programmes	8	2.1
Lack of information about future studies	3	0.8
Not sure if there will be a possibility to study what I want	3	0.8
Risk of not entering a desirable university	2	0.5
Environmental interference	26	6.4
The other people's opinion	17	4.2
The other people's controversial opinion raises doubts about the choice	8	2.0
Parents' opinion (usually negative)	5	1.2
The other people's opinions bother me	4	1.0
Financial difficulties	9	2.2
Fear because of big study fee	5	1.2
Lack of finance	3	0.8
Financial difficulties	1	0.2
No difficulties	20	5.0
Clear self-determination	20	5.0
Made a decision, no difficulties, I know what I want	12	3.0
There are no difficulties	8	2.0

Note. In total, 402 semantic units were extracted.

The second, according to its importance, was the category *Lack of information* (29.5%). It consisted of three subcategories: *Labour market* (15.5%), *Knowledge about professions* (11.9%), *Study programmes* (2.1%). This shows that almost for the one third of female students the lack of various information made choosing a future career more difficult. The female students' answers showed that usually there was a lack of information about *labour market*. The female students noted that it was not clear whether profession would be popular in future, if there would be working places, possibility to work, if profession would be useful, it was difficult to evaluate profession's demand, big competitiveness in the labour market. A part of female students found professional self-determination difficult because of insufficient *knowledge about professions* (a big variety of professions, abundance, there was a lack of information about professions, fear that I would not earn enough and so on). Only a small part of female students pointed out that they lacked information about *study programmes* (a lack of information about future studies, if there would be a possibility to learn what I want and so on).

The third, according to its importance, was the category *Environmental interference* (6.4%). It consisted of two subcategories: *The other people's opinion* (4.2%), *Finance difficulties* (2.2%). It is obvious that for a part of female students, the difficulties making a career decision arose because of the other people's opinion. The female students noted, that doubts appeared because of other people's contradictory opinion about the choice, parents' negative opinion as usual, people's opinions made you uncertain. Making a career decision, not a big part of female students experienced financial difficulties (fear because of a big study fee, lack of finance and so on).

Only a small part of female students (5.0%) pointed out that they did not experience any difficulties making a career decision, they had already decided and knew what they wanted.

Having analysed male students' answers about the difficulties emerging making a career choice, four categories were distinguished: *Personal difficulties*, *Lack of information*, *Negative persons' influence*, *No difficulties* (Table 5).

The first category (Table 5) *Personal difficulties* (71.2%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of five subcategories: *Indecision/self-determination fears and doubts* (41.2%), *Self-awareness difficulties* (19.4%), *Achievement results* (6.7%), *Instability* (3.9%). It is obvious, that for a big part of male students, personal difficulties caused a lot of problems making a career decision. Personal difficulties for male students mostly arose because of *indecision/ self-determination fears and doubts* (41.2%). Not knowing what you really want, too big profession variety, when you like a few different spheres, several professions, whether profession will really be good to you, doubts about future, rightness of choice, fear of making the wrong decision, difficulty in deciding between a perspective career and a favourable one caused indecision/self-determination fears and doubts. For a part of male students, self-awareness difficulties made professional self-determination more difficult (19.4%). They noted that they were not sure if a career would give an overall satisfaction, if they would like it, they did not know their character features, did not know what really interests them, doubts arose if they would have a success having made a career choice, if they would manage to enter a necessary study course, if they would manage to realise themselves in a chosen career. Not a big part of students thought that achievement results caused difficulties making a career decision (6.7%), because there was a doubt if they would succeed in passing exams, they acknowledged not very good learning results.

Table 5

Difficulties Making a Career Choice (Male Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Personal difficulties	126	71.2
Indecision / self-determination fear and doubts	72	41.2
I don't know what I really want to do	15	9.3
Big profession variety, a lot of them, big choice	12	6.7
I like a few different spheres, several professions	12	6.7
Lots of various professions, it is difficult to choose and make a decision	10	5.6
It is difficult to make a decision if this profession is the right for me	6	3.4
It is just difficult to make a decision	6	3.4
Doubts about future in general	4	2.2
Doubts about the rightness of the choice	3	1.7
Fear to make the wrong choice	3	1.7
It is difficult to choose between a perspective career and a favourite one	1	0.5
Self-awareness difficulties	35	19.4
I am not sure whether this profession will give overall satisfaction	10	5.6
Poor self-awareness, insufficient self-awareness	9	5.0
It is not clear if I will like my future job related to my career	6	3.4
I am not sure what really interests me	4	2.2
It is not clear if I will have a good success having made a professional decision	2	1.1
I don't know if I will manage to enter where I want	2	1.1
It is not clear if I will manage to realise myself properly in this sphere	1	0.5
Thinking, that I might not adapt	1	0.5
Achievement results	12	6.7
It is not clear how I will succeed in passing exams	8	4.5
Poor learning results	4	2.2
Instability	7	3.9
Constantly changing opinion	3	1.7
A desire to try a lot	3	1.7
Changing hobbies	1	0.5
Lack of information	40	22.2
Labour market	29	16.0
It is not clear if a profession will be popular in future	12	6.7
It is not clear if a profession will be useful (enterprising profession)	4	2.2
It is not clear what salary will be for my chosen profession	2	1.1
It is not clear if I earn enough	2	1.1
Instability in labour market	2	1.1
It is not clear if there will be working places	2	1.1
It is not clear if there will be career possibilities in Lithuania	2	1.1
It is not clear if a profession is perspective	2	1.1
It is not clear if people of a chosen profession are evaluated properly	1	0.5
Knowledge about professions	11	6.2
There's a lack of information about professions	5	2.8
It is not clear if this will guarantee good future	3	1.7
Different choice possibilities	3	1.7
Negative persons' influence	2	1.0
Family opinion	1	0.5
Parents' decision, disapproval	1	0.5

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
The other people's opinion	1	0.5
Negative attitude of the people around, disapproval of the choice	1	0.5
No difficulties	10	5.6
Clear self-determination	10	5.6
Clearly know what I want, there are no difficulties	10	5.6

Note. In total, 178 semantic units were extracted.

The second, according to its importance, was the category *Lack of information* (22.2%), which consisted of two subcategories: *Labour market* (16.0%), *Knowledge about professions* (6.2%). A part of the students lacked labour market information (16.0%): it was not clear if profession would be popular in future, what salary would be, unstable labour market, if there would be working places, what career possibilities in Lithuania were, if profession was perspective and so on. Making a career decision, male students came in touch with the knowledge about professions difficulties (6.2%) (there was a lack of information about professions, plenty of various opportunities to make a choice and so on).

The third category *Negative people's influence* (1.0%) apparently shows that only a small part of male students experienced family member and other persons' negative influence because of which difficulties arose making a career choice.

Only a small part of male students (5.0%) indicated that making a career choice they did not experience any difficulties, they clearly knew what they wanted.

Having analysed female students' answers what support is necessary making a career choice, four categories were distinguished: *Informational support*, *Persons' support*, *Self-awareness help*, *Support/encouragement* (Table 6).

Table 6

Support Making a Career Choice (Female Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Informational support	117	38.7
Professional information	74	24.7
More information about consultations	42	4.2
Lectures about career choice	12	4.0
Career cognition events	10	3.3
Career presentations	5	1.6
More lessons about careers	3	1.0
More information about non- traditional careers	2	0.6
Study information	23	7.5
Visits to various learning and study institutions	12	4.0
Open door days	5	1.6
Study, career fairs	4	1.3
More information about studies abroad	2	0.6

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Professional development through action	20	6.5
Possibility to work for one week or at least to perform practice of a chosen career	8	2.6
Various practical activities related to a career	7	2.3
Visits to working places	4	1.3
More extra-curricular activities	1	0.3
Persons' support	111	36.3
Career representatives	69	22.6
Career representative's consultations, advice	35	11.5
Conversations with specialists	16	5.3
Consultations with specialists	10	3.2
Various meetings with specialists	8	2.6
School specialists	22	7.1
Teachers' advice	10	3.2
Career consultant's advice	8	2.6
Psychologist's advice	4	1.3
Family members	13	4.3
Parents' advice	10	3.3
Parents' support	3	1.0
Students	7	2.3
Collaboration and information from the already studying	7	2.3
Self-awareness support	61	20.0
Self-analysis	30	9.9
More exhaustive self-analysis, self-awareness subjects and activities	30	9.9
Consultations	16	5.2
Just consultations on worrying questions	8	2.6
More personal consultations at school	8	2.6
Tests	15	4.9
Various tests helping to make a decision	15	4.9
Support/encouragement	15	5.0
Moral support	12	4.0
Support and encouragement	6	2.0
Just advice	6	2.0
Material support	3	1.0
Financial support	3	1.0

Note. In total, 304 semantic units were extracted.

The first category (Table 6) *Informational support* (38.7%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of three subcategories: Professional information (24.7%), Study information (7.5%), Professional development through action (6.5%). The female answers allow stating that making a career choice they mostly need support related to professional information (24.7%): they need more information about careers, lectures about career choice, events about career cognition, career presentations, lessons about careers, information about non-traditional careers. It is obvious that there is a lack of important information and this can make professional self-determination more difficult. Information about possible studies would help a part of female students making a career choice (7.5%) (visits to various learning and study institutions, open door days, study, career fairs, more information about studies abroad). For some female students, professional development through action would bet-

ter help to decide (6.5%), e.g. possibility to work, perform practice of a chosen career, practical activities related to a chosen career, a visit to working places.

The second category, according to its importance, was *Persons' support* (36.3%). It turned out that various persons' support was important for female students making a career choice. The most frequently indicated was career representative's support (22.6%), i.e. career representative's consultations, advice, conversations, meetings with them. For a part of female students, school specialist's support was necessary (7.1%) (teachers, career consultant or psychologist's advice), family members' support (4.3%) (parents' advice and support).

The third category, according to its importance, *Self-awareness support* (20.0%) shows that making a career choice, a big part of students needed support to better cognise their personal traits, character features. Female students' response analysis shows that *self-analysis* (9.9%), *consultations* (5.2%), *tests* (4.9%) can help solve that problem.

The fourth category *Support/encouragement* (5.0%) was of least importance. Only for a small part of female students, moral support (4.0%) and material support (1.0%) were necessary.

Having analysed male students' answers what support is necessary making a career choice, three categories were distinguished: *Informational support*, *Persons' support*, *Self-awareness support* (Table 7).

The first category (Table 7) *Informational support* (36.8%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of three categories: *Professional information* (22.2%), *Professional development through action* (11.9%), *Study information* (2.7%). Male students' responses allow stating that making a career choice they mostly needed help related to professional information (22.2%): more information about careers, lectures about choosing a career, good examples about works, careers, more various advertising, information on the internet and so on. It is obvious, that both male and female students need very important information, and this can make professional self-determination more difficult and determine the wrong career choice. *Professional development through action* (11.9%) could help a big part of male students making a career choice. Practice with a career representative and visits to various working places would be important for them. Only a small group of students thought that information about studies (more knowledge about studies, visits to universities) would help them making a career choice.

Table 7

Support Making a Career Choice (Male Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
Informational support	68	36.8
Professional information	41	22.2
More information about careers	14	7.6
Lectures about career choice	8	4.3
Good examples about jobs, careers	7	3.8
Acquaintance with various careers	6	3.2
More various advertising	2	1.1
More information on the internet	2	1.1
Career days	2	1.1

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
Professional development through action	22	11.9
Practice day with a career representative	16	8.7
Visits to various working places, acquaintance	6	3.2
Study information	5	2.7
More knowledge about studies	3	1.6
Visits to universities	2	1.1
Persons' help	64	35.0
School specialists	33	18.2
Career specialist's advice	20	11.2
Psychologist's advice	8	4.3
Teachers' advice	5	2.7
Career specialists	14	7.6
Meetings, conversations with career representatives	14	7.6
Close relatives	12	6.5
Parents' advice	5	2.7
Close relatives' advice	5	2.7
Parents' support	2	1.1
Career consultants	5	2.7
Necessary professionals' consultations	5	2.7
Self-awareness support	52	28.2
Self-analysis	35	19.0
Self-awareness, self-knowledge, know yourself better	15	8.2
Self-motivation increase	12	6.5
More various testing is necessary, career conformity cognition	8	4.3
Consultations	17	9.2
Just consultations	10	5.4
Individual consultations	3	1.6
Just advice on worrying questions	4	2.2

Note. In total, 184 semantic units were extracted.

The second category, according to its importance, was the category *Persons' support* (35.0%). Male students usually indicated that school specialists' (18.2%) support (career specialist, psychologist, and teachers' advice) was necessary making a career choice. Not a big part of male students needed *Career representative's* (7.6%) support (meetings, conversations with career representatives), *close people's* (6.5%) support (parents', relatives' support) making a career choice.

The third category, according to its importance, *Self-awareness support* (28.2%) shows that a support to better know yourself, your personal traits, character features was necessary for a big part of male students making a career choice. Male students' response analysis shows that *self-analysis* (19.0%) (self-cognition, self-motivation increase, various testing, conformity to career cognition) and consultations (9.2%) can help solve this problem.

Having analysed female students' answers what factors determine or make influence on a career choice / professional self-determination, two categories were distinguished: *External factors* and *Internal factors* (Table 8).

Table 8

Factors Making a Career Choice (Female Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	n	%
External factors	192	53.1
Persons' influence	78	22.1
Parents' (family) opinion and advice	52	15.0
Other people's opinion and encouragement	18	5.0
Friends, their opinion	6	1.6
Teachers' help	2	0.5
Labour market	39	10.7
Career perspective and demand	26	7.2
Labour supply and demand	10	2.7
Career prestige	3	0.8
Material state	30	8.2
Finance, financial state	10	2.7
Possibilities	9	2.5
Material difficulties	8	2.2
Fee for the studies	3	0.8
Professional possibilities	28	7.7
Paid salary, future payment	20	5.5
Career possibilities and perspectives	8	2.2
Information influence	15	4.0
Information on the internet	8	2.2
Interest in a concrete career	3	0.8
Career days	3	0.8
Book reading	1	0.2
Study possibilities	2	0.4
Study novelties	1	0.2
University prestige	1	0.2
Internal factors	172	46.9
Hobbies	78	21.4
Hobbies	50	13.7
Personal interests and desires	28	7.7
Achievements	48	13.1
Learning results/ grades	30	8.3
Exam results	16	4.4
Personal achievements	1	0.2
Foreign language knowledge	1	0.2
Personality traits	36	9.7
Personal abilities	12	3.3
Opinion change	10	2.7
Personality features, traits	4	1.1
Character features	3	0.8
Self-cognition	3	0.8
Values	2	0.5
Motivation	2	0.5
The state of a person	10	2.7
Mood / state of a person	8	2.2
Health	2	0.5

Note. In total, 364 semantic units were extracted.

The first category (Table 8) *External factors* (53.1%) was of the largest importance. It consisted of six subcategories: *Persons' influence* (22.1%), *Labour market* (10.7%), *Material state* (8.2%), *Career possibilities* (7.7%), *Information influence* (4.0%), and *Study possibilities* (0.4%). It is obvious, that lots of various external factors had influence on female students' professional self-determination. From external factors, various *persons' influence* occupied the most important place. Parents' (family) opinion and advice (15.0), the other important people's opinion and encouragement (5.0%), friends, their opinion (1.6%) had the biggest influence on the female students making a career choice. Teachers had the least influence (0.5%). *Labour market influence* occupied an important position in professional self-determination. Career perspective and demand, labour supply and demand, and career prestige were important for female students. *Material state* (financial possibilities, material difficulties, fee for the studies), *career possibilities* (paid salary, career possibilities and perspectives), *information influence* (information on the internet, career days, interest in a concrete career, book reading) and *study possibilities* (study novelties, university prestige) were important factors making a career choice.

The second, according to its importance, was the category *Internal factors* (46.9%). *Hobbies* (21.4%) (personal interests, hobbies), *achievements* (13.1%) (learning results/grades, exam results, personal achievements, foreign language knowledge), *personal features* (9.7%) (personal abilities, opinion change, personality features, character features, values, motivation) determined female students' career self-determination mostly. Only for a small part of female students, *the state of a person* (2.7%) (mood, health) had an influence on a career choice.

Having analysed male students' answers what factors determine or have influence on a career choice / professional self-determination, two categories were distinguished: *External factors* and *Internal factors* (Table 9).

The first category (Table 9) *External factors* (59.0%) was of the largest importance. This category consisted of five subcategories: *Persons' influence* (27.6%), *Labour market* (16.4%), *Career possibilities* (11.6%), *Material state* (1.9%), *Information influence* (1.5%). This shows a big variety of external factors having influence on the male students' career self-determination. Parents' opinion and advice, close people advice had the biggest influence. Teachers and friends' opinion and advice did not have a big influence on male students' professional self-determination. The research revealed that career consultant's influence on male students making a career decision was exceptionally small. An external factor having influence on professional self-determination was *labour market*. Male students indicated that career demand and perspectives, labour supply and demand, career popularity, competitiveness in the labour market were important for them. *Material state* related to career possibilities (future salary, career possibilities) had influence on professional self-determination. *Material state* (financial possibilities, study/ learning fee) and *information influence* (internet information) had a slight influence.

The second category, according to its importance, was the category *Internal factors* (41.0%). It consisted of four subcategories: *Hobbies* (20.2), *Achievements* (10.0), *Desire to improve/self-realisation* (5.4), and *Personality character features* (5.4). It is obvious that *hobbies* (personal wishes and interests) and *achievements* (learning results / grades, exam results) had the biggest influence on professional self-determination. *A desire to improve/self-realisation* (a desire to learn and improve, self-realisation possibility) and *personality character features* (personal abilities, character features, doubts, opinion change) had a small influence on professional self-determination.

Table 9

Factors Making a Career Choice (Male Students)

Category / Subcategory / Subcategory components	<i>n</i>	%
External factors	152	59.0
Persons' influence	71	27.6
Parents' opinion and advice	32	12.6
Close people advice	14	5.4
Teachers' advice and opinion	12	4.6
Friends' opinion and advice	12	4.6
Career consultant's opinion	1	0.4
Labour market	42	16.4
Career demand and perspectives	18	7.0
Labour supply and demand	11	4.3
Career popularity	10	3.9
Competitiveness in the labour market	3	1.2
Career possibilities	30	11.6
Future payment, salary	25	9.7
Career possibilities	5	1.9
Material state	5	1.9
Financial possibilities	4	1.5
Study / learning fee	1	0.4
Information influence	4	1.5
Internet information	4	1.5
Internal factors	106	41.0
Hobbies	52	20.2
Hobbies	27	10.5
Personal desires and interests	25	9.7
Achievements	26	10.0
Learning results / grades	20	7.7
Exam results	6	2.3
Desire to improve/Self-realisation	14	5.4
Desire to learn and improve	8	3.1
Self-realisation possibilities	6	2.3
Personality character features	14	5.4
Personal abilities	8	3.1
Character features	5	1.9
Doubts, opinion change	1	0.4

Note. In total, 258 semantic units were extracted.

Discussion

It has been sought by this research to analyse gymnasium senior class students' position in the aspect of future professional self-determination. The parameters such as understanding of making a choice, emerging difficulties, need of support and factors possibly having influence on a career choice have been analysed. Data analysis and categorisation, according to aforementioned parameters, have been carried out. Research results confirm that certain differences exist on the gender aspect and this has to be taken into consideration in the career education process.

Rational career decision (choice) is the essential and most significant part of career planning, because having made a mistake in the career making process, career designing (planning) will not be effective – career will be planned in that professional activity, which does not match natural person's abilities or does not have demand in a rapidly changing labour market. Making the last decision very often various career choice variants are discussed. In case of failure of entering a desirable study programme, one has to more accurately define career plans. Students' career self-determination specification takes place throughout the whole years of learning at school, and sometimes – already having acquired the speciality. However, the first career self-determination takes place namely in a general education school, therefore, school role in this process is very important (Antanaitienė & Anužis, 2014). The right career choice allows feeling that we have acquired something worth and we ourselves can give something worth to the environment. A career decision is made when existence conditions start making pressure, i.e. to live without career becomes impossible or career does not match the existential requirements. Work without a career is not perspective. Making a career choice gives an opportunity for a young person to reduce the feeling of future uncertainty (Jovaiša, 2009). Therefore, career choice is one of the most important and significant choices of the person, which determines further life quality. Research having been conducted by Lithuanian scientists show that a big part of students before finishing school do not perceive the importance of this self-determination and have not made a decision yet what career to choose, have a doubt where to study, consider several variants (Barkauskaitė, 2007; Pukelis & Garnienė, 2003; Reingardienė & Zdanavičius, 2003). School should be the place where the learner could find himself/herself, get to know, understand his/her real desires, learn important and complex things, such as career and could perceive the importance of professional self-determination. The research results allow stating that gymnasium students understand the importance of a career choice. The bigger part of gymnasium students (both female and male students) understood that a good career choice made pre-conditions for self-realisation and was a life base warranty. However, a question arises if always professional self-determination importance perception guarantees a successful career choice? Career self-determination frequently causes stress and worry for the students therefore, it is very important to cognise difficulties, which are related to a career choice and successful career planning. The research conducted in Nigeria shows that very often students can make a mistake either overestimating or underestimating different socio-economic situations and factors (Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013).

Postmodern society offers various career and lifestyle possibilities. However, the more options, the more difficult is to decide, because a possibility to choose is inevitably related to responsibility. One wants to make a sensible decision, it is a fear of making a mistake. In a market economy based knowledge society, professional judgment is not only the most important, but also the most complex one (Augienė, 2012). Professional self-determination is not a process in itself, this is an activity, requiring long-term concentration, self-reflection, creativity, and ability to foresee and evaluate various situations, to collect necessary information. Contrary to what it may seem – this is not an easy task, because this decision will influence your whole life (Ustinavičiūtė, Katkonienė, & Žemaitaitytė, 2011). Career defines a person's state in society, his/her value system, behaviour norms, life ambitions and other. Different professions raise various requirements. All this causes a lot of difficulties making a career choice.

The conducted research showed that students, both female and male, experienced various difficulties. They were fear, indecision, doubts, hobbies, interest change and so on. A very small part of respondents were those, who had already made a decision and basically did not experience difficulties. A research by Pociūtė and Išiūnaitė (2011) shows that the majority of graduates in the last months of the school year do not tend to clearly define their career choices and to describe themselves as a future specialist. The students who are very doubt-

ful about their professional choice distinguish themselves in that their career choice becomes more difficult having too little information about different specialities and about their individual features; not knowing what to do in order to make a career decision; having difficulties in decision-making independently; having too little time allotted for decision-making. It has been stated in the research, that female students' doubt in career positively is related to indecision and negatively – to emotional stability and extroversion (Pociūtė & Isiūnaitė, 2011). Our research results show that both female and male students, making a career choice, experience personal difficulties, which are related to indecision, fear, doubts, not knowing one's traits, achievement results. Making a career choice, difficulties arise because of the lack of information about labour market situation, professional requirements, study programmes. The other researchers' conducted studies also fix the lack of information stating, that one of the biggest difficulties in the process of decision-making is the lack of useful information or uncertain information (Kirdök & Harman, 2018).

It is obvious that it is necessary to develop students' career competences and to give necessary support in career decision making. Our research results revealed, that making a career choice, both female and male students usually need informational support about career peculiarities, study programmes, practical experience is preferable related to one's career of interest (professional development through activity). It has been stated in the research that the most useful information for gymnasium students would be, if it were obtained from career representatives, school specialists, family members. Teachers' role remains very significant. This correlates with the other research, which shows that the levels of achievement and competitiveness necessary to be successful in today's job market are in direct correlation with the levels of preparation and collaboration with highly trained and dedicated teachers (Faitar & Faitar, 2013). In the research conducted by Railienė (2007) it has been stated that only for a small part of students (18.4%) there is enough of information. As the most actual reason for not choosing a career, students discern the lack of information about choosing a career path, suitability to work, according to your chosen career, further learning and study possibilities, order and entry requirements to vocational institutions, specialities, raised professional requirements, situation in the labour market and its demands. The researchers accentuate that secondary school learners need some support to be able to make adequate career decision (Obiunu & Ebunu, 2014).

In the conducted research it has been stated that external factors are much more important than internal ones making a career choice. Practically person's values are not accentuated. Bukauskienė and Liobikienė (2014) also established that when planning a career young people did not pay due attention to their values and did not associate them with the choice of profession, and such an inability to recognise your values determined the wrong career choice. In the research conducted by Railienė (2007) it was revealed that career possibilities and the size of a future salary – were the main factors having influence on students' career choice.

Regardless of the abundance of qualitative data collected during this research, certain research limitations remain. Specific student groups were not included in the research, e.g. foster care children, immigrants, deviant behaviour children and so on, and their career choice problems.

Conclusions and Implications

Research results revealed that the great majority of female and male students thought, that making the right career choice was important, because this was a self-realisation warranty. Both female and male students pointed out that self-realisation was guaranteed experiencing satisfaction with activity. Certain differences came to

light in the female and male students' answers. Female students thought that having chosen the right career, self-realisation opened possibilities for hobby realisation and improvement, and male students – for dream realisation and career perspectives. Both female and male students pointed out that the second reason, according to its importance to make the right decision, was that career guaranteed life base, future perspectives opened. The third reason why it is important to make the right choice was safety warranty (stability, material safety, activity stability) for female students, and for male students – the consequences that were experienced having chosen the wrong career (influence on life, personality). Only a few of male students had a position that it was important to choose the right future career, because this guaranteed safety.

Research results allow stating that male and female students usually experience personal difficulties making a career choice. Both female and male students encounter indecision, fear and doubts, experience self-cognition difficulties, achievement results, opinions, and hobby change, which make their choice more difficult. The second experienced difficulty in decision making, according to its importance, was related to the lack of information. Female and male students point out that informational difficulties were related to labour market changes and insufficient knowledge about careers. Besides, female students also lack information about study programmes. For female students, experiences related to different environmental interference are of less importance in decision making, and for male students – experiences related to negative various persons' influence. The research allows stating that only a very small part of female and male students do not experience any difficulties, have decided and know what career to choose.

Research results allow stating that making a career choice both female and male students need *informational support*, *various persons' support* and *self-awareness support*. *Informational support* about professions is needed most frequently. Female students need more information about studies and for male students, professional development through activity is more useful, i.e. practical knowledge about profession. The second, according to its importance in making an appropriate career choice, is *various persons' help*. For female students, professional representatives' given informational support is more important, and for male students – school specialists' given support, i.e. career specialists, psychologist or teachers' advice. Not a big part of female and male students pointed out that they needed *self-awareness support*: self-analysis, consultations. Some female students indicated that moral support, support, encouragement would help in career decision making.

During the research, the factors have been ascertained, which determine gymnasium 3 and 4 class students' self-determination. The research results allow stating that *external* and *internal* factors determine professional self-determination. However, deciding, external factors more than internal ones have a bigger influence both on female and male students. Among external factors, persons' influence has the most important position. Most frequently, these are parents, family members, close people. Teachers' help, advice and opinion have a slight influence making a career choice. Labour market is an important external factor both for female and male students in making a professional decision. However, material state has a bigger influence on female students making a career choice, for male students – professional possibilities. -Internal factors have a smaller influence making a professional choice. Internal factors related to hobbies and achievements have the biggest influence both on female and male students in decision making. However, personality features have a bigger influence on female students choosing a career, and a desire to improve, realise oneself, has a bigger influence on male students.

Organising career education in a gymnasium, it is necessary to give significantly more information about career content, career acquisition possibilities and possible prospects in the labour market. It is important to form gymnasium students' self-confidence and understanding that there are different ways and possibilities of self-realisation. It is obvious that it is important to form students' understanding, that social, economic society transformations determine new challenges for human activity, therefore, safety, assuredness in a professional career is decreasing, one has to solve new problems and constantly learn. It has been revealed that making a career decision, students orient themselves more to external than to internal factors. Such an orientation decreases the possibility of choosing a career corresponding to the person's abilities, demands and at the same time increases the probability of the wrong career choice. Therefore, career consultants have to draw bigger attention to students' self-cognition and to form understanding that a successful career is more frequently achieved considering the internal factors.

Funding

The authors have no funding to report.

Competing Interests

Vincentas Lamanauskas is a member of editorial board of *Psychological Thought*, but he has not reviewed, neither edited this article. Dalia Augienė has declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgments

The authors have no support to report.

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About the Authors

Vincentas Lamanauskas is a professor of Education at the University of Šiauliai, a Doctor of Social Sciences, the Head of Scientia Socialis Ltd, the chairman of the scientific methodical centre *Scientia Educologica* and the editor-in-chief of international scientific periodicals *Journal of Baltic Science Education*, *Natural Science Education*, *Educational Policy*, *Management and Quality*, *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, and *Problems of Management in the 21st Century*. Professor Lamanauskas is a member of the Council of Lithuanian Scientific Society, the International Organization for Science and Technology Education (IOSTE). Doctor Lamanauskas is a member of a number of prestigious international organizations including the Editorial Boards of international scientific journals *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics*, *Science and Technology Education* (EJMSTE), *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy* (BJSEP), *Bulgarian Journal of Chemical Education*, *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*, *Educational Research for Social Change*, *Business Trends*, etc. Vincetas Lamanauskas is the author of more than 500 scientific and methodical publications. He makes reports at different international scientific symposiums and conferences and delivers lectures at universities abroad.

Dalia Augienė is a Senior Researcher and Associate Professor at the University of Šiauliai, Department of Education. Her main research interests are connected with career education, career counselling and career policy. She is also interested in the scientific research activity of secondary school and university students. She is the author of more than 100 scientific and methodical publications.